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In Focus

This issue opens up with a masterly article on 'Layam' by that master of layam 'TVG'. This is followed by a scholarly exposition of Dikshitar's 'Mannargudi Pancharatna Kritis' by V.V. Srivatsa and another one by Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao about Dikshitar and the Carnatic and Hindustani Paddhatis. Issues related to Indian Music Therapy are discussed by S. Sumathy in the next article. Ariyakudi the torch bearer of modern concert trends in Carnatic music is the subject of an interesting article by Garland Rajagopalan. The next is an archival article on the immortal Tamil poet Subramania Bharathi. An interesting and thought provoking interview by Subadra Murthy with Balamuralikrishna is featured in this issue. This is followed by another interview by the same author with the legendary Vempati Chinna Satyam which should provide food for thought to the modern dance gurus and dancers. Two book reviews are featured in this issue. It is with deep regret that Shanmukha publishes the obituary of T.T. Vasu, who was the leading light of the Madras Music Academy for more than two decades and who contributed in no small measure to the growth of the stature of the Academy.

ALL PERVASIVE CONCEPT OF "LAYAM" IN CARNATIC MUSIC

by Prof. T.V. Gopalakrishnan

Laya Layam Rhythm is a law of nature!

The life force, manifest in all living things including the most evolved humans is a supreme manifestation of *Prakriti* (nature). The life force is equated with the rhythm in life the flow and ebb – the expansion and contraction of the ever-present beat. It is the most imperative and indispensable factor to identify life! The surprise is that it is involuntary and mostly imperceptible. Rhythm is the stabilizing, directive force, regulating the jerky ebb and flow of life.

Layam in a restricted sense, means the Tala system, its technique and function in Indian music. The Tala system is the most evolved in Carnatic music.

Going back to the pre-historic era, we have wonderful testimony regarding the unity of melody and rhythm as a part of life. The seal (discovered in Mohenjodaro) which vividly illustrates the pipal tree – the origin of *Nadotpathi* which ultimately transforms into swaras.

Even before creation started, it is said that the cosmos was motivated by the universal rhythm and was producing a harmonious melody. This combination of rhythm and harmonious melody is the basis for the evolution of the musical scale.

The pipal tree of life is a symbolic representation of the process of *Nadotpathi* (sound production). This is graphically represented pictographically

in the seal. Two gliding creatures of the symmetrical *posa* and harmonious disposition are seen resorting to a pipal tree. The gliders represent *Prana* (life – Vayu) and *Anala* (fire). The uniformity in their upward movements towards each other denotes the evolution, *Atma* arousing the mind, in turn striking the fire etc. the *Anahata Nada* blooms into *Ahata Nada* and the Saptaswaras indicated as the seven petals of the tree. Two more leaves are shown from which the seven leaves shoot forth. The seven leaves are the Saptaswaras and the basal leaves represent the melody and rhythm.

The scriptographic representation of the *Pranava Nada* (or *Omkara Dhwani*) further emphasizes the close connection of rhythm with sound (I I I I I I) denotes the *Omkara Dhwani*.

It is explained as "the *Bijakshara* – OM" syllable of 4 matras and the elongation of the "M" the muted sound for 7 matras – a total of 11 matras. To clarify the *Omkara Dhwani* (*Bijakshara*) should last for 11 matras of time, 4 matras for the syllable OM and the elongation in a muted tone 7, the second part involving Nabhi, Hrid and Kanta.

Thus we perceive that even at the time of the Indus Valley civilization there was a clear concept of measuring and marking laya with symbols etc. It is interesting to note that the western systems of notation devised during the 10th century have yet some parallels in

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marking notation of rhythm after the passage of over 2000 years.

In the four fold Swara, Laya, Pada and Avadhana concept of Indian music, Layam is second to only to Swara and of equal importance for good music. Pada is the carrier of Swara and Laya and Avadhana is the special ability of the performer to achieve maximum results. The Layam manifests as Tala.

In one of the oldest musicological works – Dattilam, Dattila Muni defines Tala as :

*Atha Talam Pravakshyam
(Yathasastram Pramanatah) (V. 109B)
Talat Saamyam Bhavet Saamyad
Iha Sidhih Paratra Cha!*

Now I shall expound Tala based on authentic accounts in the Sastras. Through Tala, Saamyam (equipoise) is achieved, and Saamyam is the source of fulfillment here (earth) and hereafter.

In Carnatic music, Tala (tala means to establish - *tala pratishtha karane iti talah*) is the large term denoting rhythm, tempo, time measure etc and the actions and processes with which these are specified and accomplished.

Sarangadeva in his Sangita Ratnakara attributes the origin of Tala to Dakshinamurthi (Siva).

Layam manifests itself in all the performing areas of Carnatic music and dance, whether it be an Alapana, Tanam, musical composition, creative music (Manodharma) or pure Nritham or percussion.

In the Tamil work "Pancha Marapu", Talam is explained as the foundation for music and dance. It also says: "As there is a propensity for music and dance to exceed the parameters, like the rivers, Talam acts as the river banks to control and direct the flow".

*Talam Karaiye Thazhuvaisaiyaare Aattrin
Pokkeyavanalattam
Aattamum pattamum alavidum tale*

Let us have an overview of the role of Layam in the areas of alapana, compositions and creative music.

The string of Sangatis delineating a raga depends entirely on the underlying "Layam" between the different swaras connected by the vowels. The same swara combinations in a scale when rendered with an altered Layam will give a different Raga Chhaya! Eg : Devagandhari - Arabhi; Nayaki - Darbar; Yadukulakambodhi - Kambodhi.

Also in general, almost all the Rakthi ragas in Carnatic music depend on the *Antharlaya* (inner movement of Layam) between the swaras to bring out an aesthetic appeal (Ragarasa, Bhava and Anubhuthi) in their delineation. The Rakthi ragas numbering about 45 according to our great maestros (especially according to Sangeeta Pithamaha Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer) can be classified into four categories :

A) That which is best delineated in the Vilamba Laya like Devagandhari, Varali, Ahiri, Yadukulakambodhi, Sahana,

Maanji, Nayaki, Kurinji etc.

B) Those ragas which shine in Vilamba and Madhya Laya like Saveri, Huseni, Mukhari, Anandabhairavi, Neelambari, Reetigoula, Kapi, etc.

C) Ragas which are effortlessly rendered in Madhya and Druta Kalas like all the Melakartha and Ghana ragas like Sankarabharanam, Thodi, Bhairavi, Kharaharapriya, Sri, Madhyamavathi, Sourashtam etc.

D) Ragas which automatically move the singer into the top gear with facile expression in the Druta Laya phrases like Kadanakuduhalam, Nagaswaravali, Hamsadhwani, Gambhira Naatai, Goulai, Bhushavali, Manoranjani, simply put almost all the Deshadi Kritis of Thyagaraja in these class of ragas.

Another aspect to remember is that Raga delineation as a prelude to a kriti or composition should confirm with the Kalapramana of the particular composition. A fast paced alapana of Anandabhairavi followed by "Marivere, O Jagadamba, or Thyagaraja Yoga Vaibhavam" is quite inappropriate! Songs like "Himachala Thanaya, Neemadi Challaga" could be appropriate after such an alapana. A short spell of a raga in a medium fast tempo before a Madhyamakala kriti or Durithakala kriti like "Paridhanamichithe, Tholi Janma, Ne Pogada, Nennarunchi" (Malavi) is common. Even in such cases the Layam plays a very important part in the opening and concluding phrases.

Layam includes Eduppu Gathi,

Arudi, and more significantly Visranthi or Viramam. Meaningful silences between Sangathis in Alapana, Tanam, Kriti rendition, Niraval, and prolonged Swaraprastaras, form the part of superlative art of performance either in vocal or instrumental music and also in the art of accompaniment. The ecstatic experience of listening to the great doyens of Carnatic music vouch for this. For eg : The performances of my Guru Chembai Vaidyanatha Iyer, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Flute Mahalingam, the Violin of Dr. Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu, the inimitable Nadaswaram of Rajaratnam Pillai, the unique Mridangam of Palghat Mani Iyer (whether in accompaniment or Thanai Avarthanam). The Natya Sastra and the later works extol the virtue of the performer who is aware of the value of such meaningful silences!

The great kritis also described by me as the *magnum opuses* of Carnatic music owe their immortality to the inseparable interconnection between the Dhathu and Mathu, totally aligning with the inner Layam which the great Palghat Mani Iyer used to call as the "Brahma Layam", the Layam that runs as an undercurrent over the beats of the Talam and is more expressive between and beyond the beats! Mani Iyer reiterated the greatness of Niraval within the parameters of Raga, Bhava, Sahitya, Laya and Rakthi. He believed that Niraval was quite unique to Carnatic music concerts!

Each of the songs listed below provide infinite opportunities for creative

Niraval and Manodharma
Swaraprasthara

Examples:

Kritis in Kambodhi like Sree Subramanyaya Namasthe of Dikshitar, Koniadina of Pallavi Gopala Iyer, O Rangasayee of Thyagaraja; Mohana Rama of Thyagaraja in the Raga Mohanam; Thyagaraja Yoga in Anandabhairavi by Dikshitar; Chethulara and Balagopala in Bhairavi of Thyagaraja and Dikshitar and many other Kritis in Todi like Endudaginado, Kaddanuvaariki, and Amba Nannu.

The role of Layam is of vital importance in the rendition of Tanam using the eight different variations of Tanam like Manava Tanam; Ashwa Tanam; Pipeelika Tanam; Markata Tanam; Kukkuda Tanam; Vidyut Tanam; Gaja Tanam and Manduka Tanam.

As the practice of keeping Tala while singing Tanam is seldom in practice (except in the Navarathri Mandapam of Trivandrum Palace), the performer has to use his inherent Layagnanam and control the Kaalapramanam. Tempo change is also used adeptly like forays in Tishra, Khanda Gathi etc. while delineating Tanam.

Coming to Layam in connection with Varnams, Kritis, Tillanas, Padams and Javalis, one has to cover a vast area because of the variety in each category and the proliferation of composers in Carnatic music! However a brief summation is called for.

There is an ocean of difference between a Varnam taught as a lesson and the same Varnam to be rendered in a concert. Unfortunately this major aspect is lost sight of by many and the most elegant Varnam which exudes Sringeri and the epitomized Raga Rasa Bhava, is rendered as a rhythmic exercise with heavy 'a' and 'ha' expletives in the well spread out minimal sahityam of the Varnam!

Also Layam plays the vital role in distinguishing the Vilambakaala renditions of Varnam and Kritis, where it adds immense grace to the tonal sway and flow of the Dhathu-Mathu combination. The Madhyama and Duritha kala is highlighted by the hurry and effervescence which is inevitable. In all areas of embellishment, ornamentation, interpretation etc, the Layam has an integral part to play. It is left to us to wonder at the creative and imaginative genius of our great composers to make such gems of music and to have given them to us as the most valuable gifts of music.

Coming to the salient part of Layam pertaining to creative music, the art of accompaniment, art of playing solos and ensembles, one again marvels at the vast variety of Talas and their integral components which aid the creation of monumental edifices of rhythm. One sees even now (in the era of TV watch!) rasikas rooted to their feet for hours, listening to Nadaswaram and Taval Taniavarthanams (in particular) at temple festivals. The Taval has developed a highly specialized format

of rhythmic patterns, Prastaras and Laya intricacies where much depends on the union of the player with the Talam usually maintained by a non-performer.

All the intricacies that a Mridangam can produce are brought into play in the "art of accompaniment".

Bharata explains succinctly the Utthama Vadaka. The attitude of the Vadaka according to him should always -

1) Be most supportive of the music (and not necessarily the musician) as the Vadaka is the better judge to decide to do his best under any given situation.

2) Be aligned to the "Brahma Layam" of the composition as envisioned by the main performer and not to follow the beats and aksharas of the Talam which

will make the music sound like a well-rehearsed recitation and not a performance.

3) In solos, Tala Vadya ensembles and similar group attempts, the main Vadaka should always remember that *Saamyam* or equipoise (mentioned earlier by Dattila) is the watch-word. This is achieved by maintaining the inner Layam of the whole group, not allowing any rushes, or dragging to affect the smooth flow of music to create *Nada laya ananda*.

Anubhuthi and *Aananda*, the two most desirable and eternal quests in a mundane existence depend on *Laya Saamyam*.

Courtesy : PADAM - 10th Annual Day Celebrations Souvenir

Mysore Vasudevacharya was one of the finest of composer-musicians. So far as compositional skills are concerned, Vasudevacharya could be described as a *Jnana Vrddha*, since even as a child prodigy he exhibited his skill in musical composition.

He conformed to Sarangdeva's dictum that one who blends successfully the *matu* (lyric) and the *dhatu* (music) is a true *vaggeyakara*. B. V. K. Sastry has expressed the following views on the Acharya.

"An ideal composition is a product of emotion and a picture of the visions arising out of rich and variegated musical experience... It should blossom out of the depths of the heart spontaneously, filled with rich melody and decorative effects born out of mature aesthetic judgement and inner judgement. A mere assembly of words and tones could not be a composition. Structurally it should adhere to the principles of *prasa*, *yati* and *antya*, the libretto being simple and easy to render".

Source : *The Melodic Garland*

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MANNARGUDI PANCHARATNA KRITIS OF MUTTUSWAMI DIKSHITAR by Dr. V. V. Srivatsa

It is a moot point to consider as to whether Trinitarian composers intentionally composed five songs at some temples which they visited or whether it was a mere coincidence. The Pancharatna prefix /suffix do add value, as can be seen from the *Kovur Pancharatna* and *Srirangam Pancharatna* compositions of Tyagarajaswami.

If the same yardstick be applied to the compositions of Muttuswami Dikshitar, we can cull out Pancharatnas like the *Tiruvaiyyaru Pancharatna*, *Kuzhikkara Pancharatna*, *Srirangam Pancharatna* et al. There are five delectable compositions of Dikshitar dedicated to the Rajagopalaswami temple at Mannargudi, which we designate as the "*Mannargudi Pancharatna Kritis*".

Muttuswami Dikshitar appears to have stayed at Mannargudi for quite sometime and has composed his offerings on different occasions. Dikshitar appears to have relished his stay at Mannargudi and his devotion to Sri Rajagopalaswami is marked by sincerity and profundity.

The five songs are of a high musical calibre and many of them are popular, as well. However, the compositional sequence being unknown, we will adopt a sequence of convenience, in this article.

Sarasadala Nayana (Raga Khamas)

A very popular song many decades back, this can be deemed as an evergreen favourite. Dikshitar has composed eighteen songs of Lord Krishna, of which five are dedicated to Mannargudi, Rajagopalaswami.

Analysing the sahitya of this composition, we note the importance accorded to the name "Govinda" in the Pallavi. Shankaracharya sang the "Bhaja Govinda" and declared that literature or grammar does not protect a person at the time of departure from this world. The departure of the soul *praana-prayana* is indeed an obstacle, a *Sankata*. The *Mumukshu* (seeker of liberation) that he was, Dikshitar prays with the "Govinda Naama" to overcome this obstacle, as earlier propagated by Shankaracharya "Sankata Harana, Hare Govinda, Maam Paahi". There are some marks of identification, which Lord Vishnu bears even in His incarnations - the most important of those being His lotus like eyes. Shukracharya detected the Brahmachari as Vishnu only through His Lotus-eyes. Giving this aspect importance, Dikshitar praised the Lord as "Sarasa-dala Nayana".

Lord Rajagopala re-enacted the Kreedha at Mannargudi for the benefit of the Rishis, Gopila and Go-pralaya. He gave darshan to the Creator, the four-faced Brahma. Dikshitar prefaces his

Anupallavi passage with reference to Brahma, the "Neeraja Asana". Goddess Lakshmi at the Mannargudi temple, Champakavalli Thaayar, is unique in that she does not confine Herself to the precincts of the temple. She comes out of the temple with Rajagopalaswami. Very few note the separate flag-post (Dhwaja Sthamba) installed in front of the shrine of Devi Champakavalli, to facilitate her coming out of the temple. She is given equal importance as the Lord. Dikshitar cognizes this fact in the expressing "Sri Rama Antaranga".

The Charana starts with the words "Maagha-maasa-utsava". The grand annual festival at Mannargudi is held for eighteen days. Maagha Maasa was the period when cows really needed protection. In Vedic times, it is said, that beef eating was permitted in Maagha Maasa. Those opposed to it protected cows at such times. It is therefore befitting that the King of the Cowherds, Rajagopala, who protected the cows is worshipped especially in Maagha-Maasa, as in the case of Mannargudi. Dikshitar uses expressions like "Gokula-jana-paala", "Gopika Manohara", reminiscent of incidents given in Srimad Bhagavatam and extols Rajagopalaswami as the jewel of the Yadu race - "Yadavakula Bhooshana".

The Raga Khamas has a unique lilt in this composition. This is a tri-sthayi composition, which has fine madhyamakala passages. Note that there is no usage of the Kakali Nishada swara. The Khamas Raga used by

Tyagarajaswami and Dikshitar is Upanga - not Bhasanga, as found in Padams and Javalis. The swarakshara passage in the Charana, at "Maa-gha-maa-sotsava" is worthy of mention.

This Kriti can be rendered equally well in Tishra Triputa and Chatushra Jhampa talas. Many will recall its beautiful rendition in Chatushra Jhampa Tala by Sangeetha Kalanidhi Dr. Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar.

Sri Vidya Rajagopala (Raga Jaganmohana)

This is a Samashti Charana Kriti. Muttuswami Dikshitar perceives Lord Rajagopala in a totally Advaitic manner. The expression "Jeeva-Isha-Jagan Mohana Roopam" is a lofty one - capable of multiple interpretations. This expression, used by Dikshitar, in this song, emphasizes the unity of *Jeevatma* (Jeeva) and *Paramatma* (Isha), which is the Ultimate Advaitic Truth. When interpreting as Advaita, the next expression is "Jagan-mohana Roopam", the Lord, with Maaya, shows an attractive form on the earth, recalling the 'Shwetaashwatara Upanishad' dictum - "Maayam tu prakritim vidyaam maayinam tu Maheswaram". The Mannargudi temple is with Vaishnavite, Vishishtadvaitic worship. If the words "Jeeva-Isha-Jagan" are united, then it speaks of the *Apratikshiddha Siddhanta* of Vishishtadvaita. Dikshitar sees *Parabrahma* in Lord Rajagopala and addresses Him as "Dhaatramha Swaroopa". The expression "Govinda" is

used in this song, as well.

This Raga is not to be confused with Raga Jaganmohini of "Shobillu Saptaswara". This is the 38th Melakarta of the Venkatamakhin scheme and is a Prati Madhyama Raga. The use of the Rishabha Swara, especially as Graha-Swara, by Dikshitar, gives this song a haunting melody. This composition can be rendered in Tishra Eka and Chatushra Eka Talas. Generally rendered in Tishra Eka Tala.

Raajagopaalam Bhajeham (Raga Mohana)

A medium paced composition, rendered effectively in the past, by the doyen, Shri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, the Sahitya of this composition emphasises the Divinity and Mercy of Lord Rajagopala. Note expressions like "Tejomaya Mohana Kara" and "Divyaambaraaadi Dhara". There is reference in this composition, to the float festival held at the large tank called "Haridraa-Nadi".

The passage "Naaradaadi Bhajanam" brings out the essence of Raga Mohana. The uniqueness is that the Uttaranga of Raga Mohana is highlighted in this song. Forays into the tara-sthayi are unlimited.

Sri Rajagopala (Raga Saveri)

This is the magnum opus of the Mannargudi compositions. This composition has high esoteric value, as well.

Dikshitar has perceived Rajagopalaswami as a "Dheeraa" (brave person) as well as a "Veera" (warrior). Yet He is the refuge for the poor in spirit "Deena Sharanya".

It is only in this Kriti, that Dikshitar has used names of this Kshetra, like "Champakaa-Aranya" and "Dakshina-Dwarakapuri". Dikshitar's catholicity is seen when he states that this temple belongs to both the Advaitins and the Vishishtadvaitins "Vishishtadvaita Advaita Aalaya".

Dikshitar echoes a lofty sentiment of Sri Vidya, in this song. Twelve persons are rated as the highest exponents of Sri Vidya, of whom Vishnu is the best. Dikshitar praises Rajagopalaswami as "Srividya Raaja Hare". Devotees of this temple know about "Andal Sevai" when Rajagopalaswami is dressed up like a damsel. Dikshitar refers to this as "Naarivesha-dhara".

The smile on the face of Rajagopalaswami is highly enigmatic, like that of Mona Lisa. Scholars state that this smile seeks to mock at the ignorance of pseudo-pandits, who consider Devi and Rajagopala as different. The unity is demonstrated in the "Naari-vesha". Such is the greatness of Rajagopalaswami.

If you wish to see the Vishraanti of Raga Saveri, learn this composition. A magnificent song for sure.

Santana Gopalakrishnam (Raga Khamas)

This song is dedicated to the Santana Gopala icon, which is given in

the hands of devotees desiring progeny. This is a special feature of the Mannargudi temple.

Some scholars also ascribe the Bhairavi Kriti "Balagopala" to Mannargudi. This is incorrect as:

a) The sahitya is too generalized for any linkage with Mannargudi.

b) This song is better placed in the Balakrishna group, with songs like

"Cheta Sri" (Dwijaaavanti), "Balakrishnam" (Gopikavasanta), "Ananta Balakrishnam" (Ishamanohari) and "Krishna Ananda" (Gowlipantu).

Apart from these Mannargudi Pancharatna compositions can we think of a "Balakrishna Pancharatna" series too? □

Courtesy : Naadhabrahmam, October '03

Dikshitar's compositions bear a peculiar grandeur of construction based on a combination of laya, rich diction and melody in majestic flow. His style is manly and vigorous - the vainika style; and in the presentation of ragas, he is unsurpassed. Repeated renderings present one with freshness, enhanced charm and deeper meaning. Sangita Kalanidhi T.L. Venkatarama Ayyar, in his 'Biography of Dikshitar' (1968) observes :

"The most outstanding feature of the compositions of Dikshitar is their richness in raga bhava; he was a vainika and a gayaka as he clarifies in his Balagopala (Bhairavi); his krithis are rich with gamakas or graces which impart beauty to the songs and his mastery of the veena had its spell and impact on the songs he composed. There is no other composer of Carnatic Music, besides Dikshitar, in whose composition we can see such wealth of gamakas."

It might be said that in the songs of Dikshitar, sahitya and music are in unison, like Parvati and Parameshwara. Expertise in veena was a characteristic of the Dikshitar family and the guiding star for their excellence in music and musical compositions. Cherished as a gift of God, the parts of the veena are described thus:

"The Veena Danda represents Siva; the strings Parvati; the dragon head Vishnu; the bridge Lakshmi; the balancing gourd Brahma; the connecting metal cone Saraswati; the hanger the mythological serpent Vasuki; the Jeeva, the Moon and the horse-shoe holding the hanger the Sun."

The Veena is thus "the abode of divinity and His source of happiness" says Sangita Ratnakara. Keeping in full view of all these, Dikshitar's expertise on the veena had a positive impact on the construction of his compositions - slow, majestic, grand and rhythmic with due emphasis on laya; intellectually superior with greater portrayal of raga bhava.

Dr. V. Raghavan says:

"While on the one hand his style may be considered to owe its laya and visranti, karvai and gamaka to the veena, his scholarly zeal, panditya led him to give in his songs exhaustive expositions not only of forms of individual ragas, of celebrity as well as rarity but also to illustrate through them the service of ragas, melas and janyas."

Source : A Garland

DIKSHITAR AND KARNATIC AND HINDUSTANI PADDHATIS by Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao

My approach to the subject is that of a student of Karnatic Music, willing to absorb whatever is excellent in the Hindustani Paddhati, so that I could do Karnatic Music better in the Karnatic style and idiom, and without prejudice to the peculiar raga chaya. Needless to say that without proper training over a number of years in Hindustani music under a great guru, no attempt to render Hindustani *cheezes* (uruppadis) can meet even with tolerable success. My concern is to share with you the principles of enlightened eclecticism that a close study of Muthuswami Dikshitar's compositions reveal.

I wish to give a brief account of the historical aspect or better still, the lakshana aspect of the twin systems in the words of Pandit Ratanjankar and of my guru Sri T. L. Venkatarama Iyer. It is obvious that the two systems of Indian Music were but two branches of the same tree - having the same roots and trunk and yielding similar fruits and that due to the historical factors of Muslim invasion in the North, two divergent systems were evolved, the North Indian Hindustani music being the outcome of the Indian Music plus the excellences of Persian and Arabic Music. The fundamentals are the same. "Sruti Mata, Laya Pita", "Ragapradhanam Sangitam". The saptaswaras, the twelve notes, the twenty-two srutis, gamakas, alankara shobha, the importance of voice -

"Kim Tena Gaatram Vina or Gatram Vina Gayana Ma Prasastam" - the ideals of Manodharma Sadhana Paddhati are all similar. I refer the readers to Pandit Ratanjankar's "Dr. Raghavan Shashtiabdhapurthi Endowment Lecture" published in the Journal of the Music Academy of 1970. After tracing the history of raga-classification in the post Ratnakara period Pandit says: "the Moorchanas gave place to the system of Janaka-Janya classification while the principle underlying the classification of the ten types of Ragas suggested the idea of the Raga-Ragini classification. In the Southern system of Indian Music, the Janaka-Janya (Thaat Raga) classification seems to have been introduced by Vidyaranya of Vijayanagar, author of a work by name 'Sangitasara' written some time in 14th century AD. As already pointed out, the Raga-Ragini classification seems to have been introduced by some musicologist of the 15th century, who evolved this classification out of ten groups, Grama-Raga etc. of the ancient system of music. Some pandits feel that the Raga-Ragini classification may have had its origin in the Persian Melodies in Merquams, Shobas, Ghoshas etc. (Thakur Jayadev Singh strongly differed from this common belief and he would maintain that the principles laid down by Bharata are still obtaining more in Hindustani system - for instance, the rule that Antara Gandhara

and Kakali Nishada are more aesthetic in Arohana Sancharas). But the types of Ragas had already prepared the ground for the Raga-Ragini system. The bifurcation of the Indian Music into two distinct systems, the Hindustani and Karnatic began with these two different classifications of the Indian melodies".

I now wish to place before you the considered views of Shri T.L. Venkatarama Iyer - views with which most of you are so familiar. These are extracts from Shri Iyer's book of Muthuswami Dikshitar published by the National Book Trust, India. Shri T.L. Venkatarama Iyer says: "Muthuswami Dikshitar spent five years in Kashi in the company of the holy saint Chidambaranatha Yogi, doing *Adhyaatmasaadhana*". That takes us on to a topic, which is of great value in the study of the compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar, as to how far they were influenced by Hindustani Music. It should be remembered in this connection that though the Hindustani and Karnatic systems of music, present distinctive features and may strike one on the first flush as alien to each other, the fact is that they are branches of the same system of music. They are both derived from the same source and are based on the concepts of Raga and Tala, which are peculiar to the Music of India. The theory of music is the same in both the systems (you just have to peruse a question paper of B. Music in Hindustani, where more than half of the questions can be answered by students of Karnatic Music) and the treatises in which they are

expounded are common to both. It is true that they have developed each its own individual, but the difference is merely dialectical in character. In the days of Venkatamakhi these differences had not become so pronounced. (I am rather doubtful about this observation of my guru.) He was himself a master of Hindustani Music (Venkatamakhi was a student of his own brother Yagna Narayana Dikshitar and of Tanappacharya who came from the North). In Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini in the life of Venkatamakhi, the following passage occurs :

"Venkatamakhi was a disciple of his elder brother Yagna Narayana Dikshitar. With his father's (Govinda Dikshitar) consent, Venkatamakhi learnt the Lakshana and Lakshya of (classical) music from a great Vaggeyakara named Tanappacharya who hailed from the North. He has composed a Gitam 'Gandharva Janata' in praise of his Guru Tanappacharya, in Trikhanda, sang it to his father and brother and got their approbation. The Gitam is still in vogue."

The Karnatic system had before his (Venkatamakhi's) days adopted and assimilated several Hindustani Ragas and Venkatamakhi had composed Lakshana Gitas on them. After his time owing to the prevailing conditions the two systems began to lose touch with each other, and began to develop on independent lines that resulted in the accentuation of differences. For the same reason, the Hindustani Ragas which had earlier been absorbed in the Karnatic

system lost during this period, some of their original features and instead adopted new sancharas, thereby taking a somewhat different complexion. That was the condition of Hindustani Music in South India during the latter half of the 18th century.

Muthuswami Dikshitar was brought up in the tradition of Venkatamakhi and Hindustani Music strongly appealed to him. During his stay in Kashi, he had an excellent opportunity of listening to Hindustani Music in all its purity and he fully availed himself of the same for learning it. Except when engaged in the services of God or of the Guru, he devoted himself to the practice of music in general and of the Hindustani Ragas in particular and acquired mastery over them. This had a profound influence on his mind and this can be seen not only in his handling of the Hindustani ragas but also in the portrayal of all ragas in general. It has been already stated that some Hindustani Ragas had been adopted in Karnatic Music, but then they suffered some change during the post - Venkatamakhi period. In the compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar they regained their original purity and form. Having learnt the Hindustani Ragas first hand in Benares, Dikshitar was able to present a picture true to Hindustani version, though he was unable wholly to discard some of their accretions in the South. To give an illustration, the Raga Sarang of the Hindustani system had been adopted in Karnatic Music under the name of Brindavani. Such changes in the

names of Ragas are not unusual, as for example in the case of Malkauns-Hindolam, but they do not affect the substance of the melodies. Venkatamakhi has a Gita in Brindavani beginning with the words "Ambara Sambhu Re". The Lakshana of the Raga as handled by him is Arohana SRMPNS and Avarohana SNPMRS and it is the same as that of the Karnatic raga Madhyamavati, except that it also takes Kakali Nishada and has some characteristic sancharas. The Lakshanas of Brindavani in this Gita conforms fully to that of Sarang in the Hindustani system. Here I wish to offer a word or two by comment. In Hindustani the Kakali Nishada occurs in Arohana and Kaisiki only in the Avarohana; and also the touch of Gandhara. So North Indian Vidwans told me that they would call this Madhyamadi Sarang and not Brindavana Saranga.

The Hindustani singers do exact double and treble Kalas like Karnatic Varnams or Pallavi. Murki Sangatis as we add to Diskhitar Krithis are a strict taboo. I feel South Indian Vidwans must learn simple Bhajans and then Dhrupads - just the Bandish in popular, familiar, parallel ragas and then only proceed to learn Khyals and later still Thumris.

I will resume Shri T.L.V. Iyer's account. "After the days of Venkatamakhi, the raga which came to be called Brindavana Saranga combining the names in both the systems, underwent some changes. There was an occasional use of Sadharana Gandhara.

That is not of much consequence. But the Kakali Nishada Prayoga and the characteristic sancharas came to be dropped and this completely altered the complexion of the Raga. All this was set right by Muthuswami Dikshitar. He has composed a number of songs in Brindavana Saranga – "Rangapura Vihara", "Swaminathena" and "Soundararajam" and except for the very slight use of Sadharana Gandhara which can even be omitted without any detriment to the piece, his rendering of the Raga is precisely the same as that of Sarang in Hindustani".

Turning next to the other Hindustani Ragas handled by Dikshitar, he has composed a number of pieces in Raga Yamuna Kalyani (Yaman of Hindustani Music) and among them special mention must be made of the song "Jambupathe" which for its richness of Raga Bhava and grandeur stands unrivalled. His song in Hamir Kalyani "Parimala Ranganatham" is again a brilliant composition bringing out impressively the features of the Raga Kedar, which had for centuries been adopted as part of it in South Music (there is Hameer in Hindustani Music – it has no gandhara in MaGRS - it is just MRS). Enough has been said to show that the compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar have been greatly enriched by his knowledge of Hindustani Ragas and it seems desirable that there should be a critical study of his compositions in this aspect by persons having knowledge of both these systems. Shri Iyer observes - "Even in the handling of Ragas other than

those adopted from the Hindustani system, the compositions of Dikshitar bear a strong impress of his knowledge of that system". Shri Iyer further observes elsewhere - "Because of his studies in Benaras we have from him renderings of many ragas of Hindustani system which had been assimilated in Karnatic system in all their original form and colour. For those three examples are handy – "Sri Satyanarayanam" in Subha Pantuvarali; "Chetasri" in Dvijavanti or Jaijaivanti and "Neerajakshi" in Hindolam. Apart from this even in the rendering of the ragas, generally we see the influence exerted by Hindustani Music on his songs.

"Though Gamakas are common to both Hindustani and Karnatic systems, the former lays greater emphasis on some of them, as for example, Jaaru. The compositions of Dikshitar also gives great prominence to this Gamaka. It may in general be said, that certain Gamakas are very appropriate to Vilambakala music and so it is only to be expected that they would figure largely both in the Alapa of Hindustani Ragas and in the compositions of Dikshitar. In the rendering of these Gamakas, Dikshitar found in Hindustani Music much that was congenial to him."

Indeed a Karnataka Sangeetha Vidwan must make a deep study of these characteristic Gamakas which are peculiar to one of the two systems only and avoid mixing them up; for this an intimate study and grasp of the Raga Swarupa of both the systems must be acquired, or we will get

only hybrids where the change or the beauty of the alien system will sound like an intruder. This is an *Aupachaarika* - I feel this sort of departure is better avoided.

Ragas must be rendered with all the peculiar sancharas and anuswaras and the individual, traditional 'Raga Rupa', scrupulously preserving the 'Dhvani Vishesha' of our ragas. Greater attention to Mandara Sthayi, Vilamba Alapana and staying on important notes with a large varieties of

sancharas centered on them will help us capture the soulful 'Nada Shilpa' of Hindustani performers without in anyway sacrificing the peculiar Gamakas and raga flavours of Karnatic system. To learn the kritis of Dikshitar in the traditional style preserving the Vilamba Kala and Gamaka Pushti will ensure the acquisition of all that is excellent and worthy of adoption in the Hindustani Paddhati.

Courtesy : *The Journal Of The Music Academy - Vol XLVII* □

There are recorded versions of two concerts given by Tyagaraja while young, as distinct from his regular bhajans. One, at the age of twenty-five was before a distinguished audience of vidwans and his guru, Sonti Venkatasubbiah. It was perhaps remarkable that the guru has described his disciple as a vast flower-garden while he himself is but a leaf therein. 'Janakiramana' (Suddhaseemantini) and 'Dorakuna Ituvanti Seva' (Bilahari) were among his compositions that he sang on this occasion. The second concert was before Sonti Venkatasubbiah at Thanjavur in the presence of vidwans, when he rendered an elaborate raga alapana in Kambhoji and sang his piece 'Mari Mari Ninne'. The audience were in rapturous ecstasies - a delightful dip in the Ocean of *Ganarasa*!

As Suddhananda Bharati beautifully summarized his life,

'Tyagaraja's father was Rama Brahman; his book was the immortal epic, Valmiki Ramayana; his mantra was Rama; his God was Rama; and his life was a stream of Rama Consciousness... he was Mira in emotion, a Kabir in devotion, a Purandara Dasa in music and a Nammalwar in vision.'

He completed Rama-nama japa ten million times twice and had Vision of Rama. The under-mentioned songs were reportedly sung on such occasions:

Ela Nee Dayaradu Paraaku Jese	(Atana)
Kanugontini Sriramuni Nedu	(Bilahari)
Nadasudha Rasambilanu	(Arabhi)
Upacharamu Jese	(Bhairavi)
Dorakuna Ituvanti Seva	(Bilahari)

Source : *The Fragrant Garland*

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INDIAN MUSIC THERAPY RESEARCH - ISSUES

by S. Sumathy

Music Therapy is still an emerging discipline in India. But of late, there is an increased awareness for the need to get engaged in qualitative and quantitative researches in this field so as to give a scientific endorsement to the immense information available in our tradition and culture in this regard. Indus Civilization is one of the earliest documented civilizations in the world, contributing to a very rich cultural heritage, to which, music was an integral part. India being a country of cultural collage, music of each of these contributing cultures interacting with each other, helped in evolving a unique Raga system of music. Unlike Western Music, which is a reading music, Indian Music is multifaceted being philosophical, spiritual, aesthetic, psychological and cultural

Our ancient tradition knew by intuition that the science of sound was very important for use in every condition of life in healing, in teaching, in evolving and accomplishment. They knew the power of sound and intonation. The Vedas and Upanishads had more of sound and rhythm and were used as a source of healing and upliftment. The very important aspect of ancient Indian music was that it recognized the different aspects of music and the ways of expressing with the specific tone and rhythm, to bring the desired equilibrium or desired emotions. The music of the peasants was different from that of the

intellectuals. The music of the stage was different from that of the temple and the music for entertainment was different. There were rules for each form and yet they were so naturally different. They used three aspects – language, playing and movement in music – Gita, Vadya and Nritya – to produce a psychological effect.

Because Music Therapy is interdisciplinary in nature, there are many areas which may not fall within the boundaries of Music Therapy, but studies may be considered as foundational topics, which would contribute to the researches in Music Therapy. These foundational topics though do not relate to the clinical problems in music therapy, the conditions of the clients, their needs and experiences, the findings provide empirical support for related concepts and notions. While practicing Music Therapy, there are a lot of interactions, verbal as well as musical with the clients and so culture plays an important role for the music therapists to address these interactions. Studies relating to listening patterns of different cultures, psychology of music, sociology or anthropology of music, acoustics or psychoacoustics, musical training, and socio-economic, political and cultural factors having an impact on health care etc. could be considered. Studies of the elements of music (Raga and Tala), perception of music, how the brain processes the music

and affective responses to music are also basic and foundational.

How long can we talk only about the different inherent potentials of our music? There is a need to popularize and make it evidence based so that a scientific endorsement is given by rediscovering our tradition and culture. When Music Therapy is an insurance reimbursable profession in the West, why not Indian Music? At present, Indian Music Therapy has no place in the international research arena. A system must be evolved to educate, train and provide experience to the aspiring music therapists, which only would motivate them to indulge in more and more of researches and also practice Music Therapy in clinical and non-clinical environs confidently. Musicologists, psychologists and medical professionals must make combined efforts to promote this discipline and must engage themselves in clinical research or action research which would increase the knowledge base in Music Therapy and would contribute to clinical practice in future. It is highly challenging to pinpoint which aspect of our music, whether the raga system or the spiritual aspect or the philosophical pursuit or the unique rhythm system, which contributes to healing. In Music Therapy, music, the most subjective of the arts as a functional medium is used. It is difficult because of many variables. It requires being objective about the subjective. A suitable research methodology is to be evolved relevant to our music, quantitatively and qualitatively.

In the personal experience of the author during her present research in Music Therapy, music definitely has many powerful elements of humanity. The faith, the hope, the love and the spirit that the art of music gives – call these elements anything, music goes beyond our body to our inner mind, soothes and comforts us, which the anatomically reacting medicine cannot give. Singing and listening to music make us realize that we are more than a simple collection of parts.

Musical preferences in the therapeutic setting

The taste for music is inborn in man though it differs from person to person. The different forms of music, be it classical or devotional or light or folk is preferred by the individual based on one's cultural upbringing as music is culture specific. The listening patterns of individuals are greatly influenced by one's upbringing and the socio-cultural atmosphere that one is in. Different forms of music are preferred by different people.

Only the intellectuals prefer technicality and the laity are satisfied with the simple rhythm, because rhythm is not cultural though form of music is. One's preferences and receptiveness to music is very important in bringing the desired therapeutic effect. Hence, music plays a great role in evoking pleasant moods and eliciting relaxation responses. Classical Music pieces of high technicality cause displeasure to listeners who have no prior knowledge on classical music and have

no cultivated taste.

Integrated medicine

Integrated medicine is used to describe a system in which the conventional medical care and complementary therapies are integrated together within a practice, institution etc. each complementing the other. The integrated health care is based on holistic approach which deals with illness as a dysfunction of the body and mind and not only on microscopic components.

Music Therapy, considered as one of the complementary systems of treatment exists as a belief system with the higher socio-economic groups having high levels of education and who are aware that music has properties to promote relaxation, encourage self-healing and alleviate their anxiety and depression. The desire to take more responsibility and participation in health care is also an important factor in these people, with whom, this system has become popular. Institutions like Apollo Hospitals, Chennai have introduced Music Therapy as a complementary one, which proves that medical professionals also support this idea of music being used as an adjuvant system.

Music Therapy is growing more and more popular as a patient-centered medicine, as it fulfills the perceived unmet psychological needs of the patients. In a clinical setting, the patients have multiple stressors beginning with diagnosis, treatment and the prognosis, the cost of the treatment, change in quality of life etc

These stressors, if perceived to be harmful or dangerous, coping up becomes difficult, leading the patients to emotional distress, anxiety and depressed moods. Music, by eliciting relaxation responses, alleviates anxiety and soothes the mind and it is natural that people are able to think better and effectively and are in a better control of the situation, when the mind is in a relaxed state. When music becomes the active focus of attention, it serves as a distraction from negative feelings and emotions associated with any illness

Music Therapy researches

The existence of Music Therapy as a belief system in India is gaining more and more popularity in the clinical arena with people's responses to music and musical situations, being objectively evaluated to prove its efficacy. Still in its infancy stage in India, Music Therapy research, theory and practice have yet to develop, to provide a strong base, shape and strength to clinical practice and to evolve standardized procedures and techniques suitable to our culture. Unlike other healing systems, Music Therapy does not bring out a particular outcome which is the same for every one at all times. So more and more scientific studies and controlled experimentation have to be undertaken which might strengthen and would vouch for the efficacy of Indian Music Therapy

An empirical method - a quantitative research to evidence cause and effect of music is being tried by way of a

randomized controlled trial at the belief that music is first and Cancer Institute, Adyar, Chennai foremost a context bound, social by this author on cancer related pain and experience, shaped by values and its functional symptoms and quality and traditions of our culture. of life. This investigation has The author can be contacted an ethnographic approach, reflecting on sumusundar@yahoo.com □

The present day concert pattern was perfected by Patnam Subramania Ayyar and Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar. It is to the credit of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar that by consistent adherence to this pattern and trimming it, he streamlined the pattern to suit concerts at sabhas and the like during 1920 - 1940. A great musician, a good teacher, an amiable friend and a traditionalist, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar was admired and adored. He was the undisputed doyen of musicians of his time.

Sangita Kalanidhi B. Rajam Iyer who underwent gurukulavasa under Ayyangar for a decade says:

My guru maintained classical values throughout. There would be a varnam at the commencement and at least one krithi of his master Srinivasa Ayyangar. His concerts became models for others. His alapanas brought out the soul of ragas and were not swara oriented. I used to marvel at his voice-control, his Ghana-laya-lalitha saareeram (voice).

Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar was the ideal musician to G. N. Balasubramaniam. The junior Sangita Kalanidhi had many good things to say about the senior Sangita Kalanidhi. Some excerpts from his 1963 article:

"He is probably the one instance of a unique wedlock of seeming incompatibles - Sastra and Sravya and tradition and modernity... He knows what a thing is about, leaving nothing to chance or the moment, preferring "how" a thing is done to "what"... That is why he is so dependable and never below par on any occasion... What the Gita is to Indian Philosophy, the music of Ariyakudi is to Carnatic Music."

Source : A Garland & The Fragrant Garland

ARIYAKUDI by 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

The soul and spirit of the excellence of Indian music lie in its unique, ineffable foundation of *manodharmic bhava-rasa, raga bhava, gamakas*, etc. These come up to full focus when the presentation by the artiste is replete with ornamentation and embellishments brought out with seductive grace and refined subtlety that satisfy (many a time, overwhelm) the *cognoscenti* and the lay. Mere repetitive singing as common folks sing at *nalangu*, etc. would not catch the imagination of the earnest *rasika* and dwell for long in his receptive musical mind to be recalled at leisure and enjoyed with pleasure. To be fully imaginative in the vital realm of *manodharma*, the artiste spends valuable time and constant explorative practice 'when alone with sangita', music alone keeping company. In a sense it is artistic scouting. Seclusion and environmental silence confer on him the absolute unfettered freedom and field to practise giving full vent to the imaginative pulls and suggestions of his vibrant mind undeterred by noise from streets and houses and possible objections of co-dwellers. This freedom for uninhibited practice is *sine qua non* for practitioners in Indian music as it is a sweet tender plant to be nourished with care and nurtured with solicitude and attention. This unique facility will be unavailable in urban areas subjected to considerations of conveyance, timetable and lack of scope to indulge in *manodharmic*

practice with freedom. This accounts for the paucity of candidates from music institutions reaching the top in the hierarchy winning fabulous name and fame on the concert stage. Uninhibited practice was possible in yester decades when wholesome music germinated and flowered mostly in rural places and found a receptive market later in urban areas. One cannot grow paddy or wheat in Sion but it can provide the market for it. Maharajapuram, Ariyakudi, Chembai, Musiri, Semmangudi, Madurai Mani and most of the other titans of yester decades had enjoyed this rare boon and facility. They flowered in rural gardens, reached the top easily and stayed there for long because the foundation was natural and impregnable. Apart from factors like the innate genius and heredity of the candidate, *guru shishya inter se* relations etc., the environment factor in the formative years had contributed much, very much. Once the basic edifice is well planned and rooted and the garden too is laid out, the nurtured musical plants put forth fragrant melodic flowers of diverse hues for the joy of the devout and the art conscious. In full support of this, the life and attainments of the great Ariyakudi Ramanuja Ayyangar can be cited. As Sri Rama was leaving for the forest with his beloved consort and peerless brother, he was making gifts as per the practice. Trijata, a poor *brahmana* by name appeared with a request. Rama advised

him in a light mood, 'Please throw that stick of yours; you shall have all the cattle upto that point where it lands'. And he enjoyed the good effort of that man and presented him with the cattle as promised. But most of the veterans had no need to make any such effort because they were masters of the lands that were jungles, shrub jungles, etc. for musical practice. And the village Ariyakudi boasted quite a lot of them for the young practitioner to delight as he pleased. The initial battle and success in his musical life were won fully in the vast expanses of his native land where he enjoyed the facility for strenuous practice.

Born on May 19, 1890 at Ariyakudi near Devakottai in the heart of the famous and affluent Chettinadu, off Tiruvengada Ayyangar and Nachiar alias Chellammal, Ramanuja Ayyangar underwent siksha under Pudukottai Malayappa Ayyar for three years, Namakkal maestro Narasimha Ayyangar for two years and Poochi [Ramnad] Srinivasa Ayyangar for five years. The foundation was enviably rich and varied and the last *guru* was a truly great *vaggeyakara*. Father Tiruvengadam Ayyangar himself was familiar with music apart from expertise in *Vedas* and astrology. Young Ramanujam would take to isolated places far from the haunts of men and, amidst the graceful, inviting wealth of unpolluted nature, practice intensely. That intensive practice had presumably revealed to him not only the vast potential of his own vibrant voice, but a grand vision of the unconquered vistas and glory of Classical

Carnatic music and helped him to imbibe and assimilate the cream of it enriching his vast reservoir of musical excellence. This had been the same with many of the giants of bygone days. Ghanam Krishna Ayyar, for instance, would jump on his horse and ride to Kabisthalam from Thanjavur and practise intensely amidst the verdant beauty of the Cauvery, hailed as Rajeswari by Sri Tyagaraja. The fragrant flower of music blossoms freely in such natural habitat. And, if many a titan is remembered today with fond, conjuring recollections, it is in no small measure due to their initial intensive practice and march to the summit purely on merit. They grew up literally on the lap of the innate beauty and grandeur of Nature. Though their physical presence is now missing, their art, contribution, legacy linger on undiminished, well-cherished by responsive hearts to this day. Titans of the past mostly belong to this grand tribe and their way of life is there well laid out for emulation. Young practitioners should avail of the holidays to seek such favourable haunts for dedicated practice.

Young Ramanujam learnt Tamil at the Devakottai Tamil Patasala and Sanskrit under Milaganur Krishna Sastrigal, which helped him much in setting to tunes and handling compositions in those languages in later days. There was something grand in his debut too. It was a marriage at Kandanur near his own place. The eminence of the full complement of accompanists for a beginner is startling and surprising.

Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar on violin, Azhaganambi Pillai on mridangam, Dakshinamurti Pillai on kanjira and Sundaram Ayyar on ghatam were the best to ask for. The debut was an instant success. The year 1918 saw him present his initial tributes to Saint Tyagaraja at the *Aradhana* accompanied by stalwarts again. For well over four decades from then on, he was to lead or be in the forefront of successive Tyagaraja *Aradhanas*, it may be recollected. In 1920, he made his advent at Madras.

Ariyakudi, Musiri, Chembai and Semmangudi were the quartette in constant demand for concerts for long since the 1930s, with Madurai Mani, GNB and other celebrities advancing to the coveted positions at the top of the hierarchy. Ariyakudi enjoyed a resonant voice with a brimful, vibrant, unfailing, well-tuned timbre that reached effortlessly the corners of any auditorium *sans* mikes. His concert programmes were well planned. In fact, the concert pattern put into practice earlier by venerable Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar and Patnam Subrahmanya Ayyar was perfected by him. The songs were well chosen for *sahitya-sangita sukham*. There was no extra, avoidable, elongated emphasis either on *raga alapana*, *niraval*, *swaraprastara* or any other. Like the expert scientist in his laboratory, would he avail of each to measured lengths alone. There would be a Tamil composition or two. *Sruti Suddham* was impeccable. *Madhya sthayi* was his choice to revel. He sat there on the dais

with dignity and decorum and never resorted to theatrics indulged in by many others inflicting on themselves avoidable physical strain. It would seem to the audience as if he was enjoying his own rendition — *atmanubhava* for *atma tripti*. When the musical mind and senses are in *advaitic* coordination concerted union feeding each other, where was the occasion for theatrics? He was picture of a true Vaishnava with sartorial simplicity and elegance. The learned E. Krishna Ayyar, who was instrumental in revolutionizing the art of *bharata natyam*, certifies to the above thus

"Ayyangar was not supposed to attempt generally at much of extempore flights of fancy or *manodharma* on the platform. Antics and acrobatics had no place in his art. Simplicity, grace and finish were the notable features of his style. He was an excellent programme planner."

In many ways, he was the antithesis of Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar on and off the stage. Both were masters of the art but of different approach. If Ariyakudi was known for consistency and results, Maharajapuram was the opposite who dared to plunge into the labyrinths of *manodharmic* music with all its pitfalls never caring for results. Ayyangar was virtually *primus inter pares* among musicians and kept up the privilege to the last [1967]. 'He was a trendsetter of seminal influence. A gentleman of goodwill. A colossus who strode the Carnatic music stage for long'.

Palghat Mani Ayyar, percussion maestro, who provided support at most

of his concerts, would turn a fond *rasika* forgetting his role as accompanist and whisper, 'Ayyangar's music has the inbuilt *layam* adequately. Whenever I mention "music", it is Shri Ayyangar's which takes shape in my heart. He is a compound of many an excellence and a performer of peerless quality.' Pudukottai Dakshinamurti Pillai will give vent to his appreciation on the concert stage invoking the Lord, 'Andava!' G.N.B. was all praise of him stating that he was inspired by the Ayyangar *bani*. Ayyangar's concerts sailed on with grip, grit, grasp and grandeur and the audience sat surrendering themselves to the charm of a gifted voice that gave full scope to 'nabhi, hrt, kanta, rasana' and the well-articulated rendition enjoying *gaambhiryam*.

He set to tune himself or through his dedicated disciples sacred hymns and songs in Tamil. Those were days when titles and honours were carefully filtered and weighed by august bodies before conferment. Still, Ayyangar was rightly honoured with many reputed titles like :

Sangita Ratnakara	1932 at Vellore
Sangita Kalanidhi	1938 by Music Academy
Asthana Vidwan.	Mysore Court 1944
Gayaka Sikhamani	1946 by Mysore Durbar
Sangita Kala Sikhamani	1947 by Indian Fine Arts Society
Gayaka Gandarva	1951 at Erode
Was the first to receive Presidential Award	in 1952
Was the first to sing at Radio Sammelan in 1955	

A man is judged, as is often said, by the legacy he leaves. His distinguished disciples K.V. Narayanaswami and B. Rajam Ayyar both rose to the top and became Sangita Kalanidhis. Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar relates an event to show how Ayyangar would come down to the level of even the young in a bid to please. A bright boy was about to cross Ayyar and Ayyangar on the street without noticing them. Ayyangar stopped him and enquired :

'How is your grandfather?'
'Grandfather! I have none now!'
'Oh! It should be your father. How is he?'
Father? He died when I was a child!
'Yes, yes. It should be so. Be a good boy worthy of them' and he let him off.

When Semmangudi asked him whether he had mistaken the boy for anyone else, he replied,

'No, No! Now he has come to know me.
'When he grows old, he may be of some use to me!'

That was Ayyangar's tool in operation in the art of personnel management. Contacts like music were to be productive to him.

I shall wind up this article mentioning an interesting interlude between H.H. Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi and Ayyangar. After a concert at Devakottai, Ayyangar was paying his respects to the sage at his camp at Elayatangudi. The music crazy saint asked him to sing and Ayyangar rendered the enchanting song of Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar Sri

Subramanyaya Namaste much to the *atma trpti* – soulful relish of the sage.

'Ramanujam, how this enchanting raga came to be called *Kambhoji*?'

[Ayyangar felt, so he had recorded, 'I should have left after the concert without coming here Now, before the saint, I have placed myself to plead my ignorance']

'I am not aware of it, Swamiji.'

'Ramanujam'***, you see *Sanatana Dharma* was once followed from Afghanistan to Thailand Several areas had special fancies for individual ragas. *Kambhojam* is modern Thailand Some say it is in the Himalayan belt. As this *raga* was very popular there, it came to be called *Kambhoji*. Like this you have *Sourashtram*, *Kannada*, *Kedaram*, etc. Geographical origin of *raga* names is to be inferred by the prime popularity of individual ragas there

[*** Affability, cordiality, Intellectual discussion constituted the cornerstone of that Sage's approach to men and matters.]

After prostration, the maestro took hurried leave of him wiser by the unexpected advent into musicology, the realm of which is admittedly vast and different.

[Having dealt with the renowned son of the place, it is fit and proper that a few words could find place herein on the *sthala* itself. Once an *asukavi* paid an unscheduled visit to it. An *asukavi* is one whose poem containing his verdict on men and matters would have sure and certain effect. The poet got angry as none had taken notice of him. So, he began giving expression to a song called *vasaipaattu*. People then realized the instant menace to

their future and prayed for forgiveness. Relenting, he completed the poem mentioning that 'What is, shall be so', meaning that *status quo* shall rule. In the result, the village did not flourish as other places nearby had. The people, on being reminded of this by me, assembled at Rameswaram, took sacred bath at Agni Tirtha and worshipped Sri Ramanatha-Devi Parvathavarthini praying for an end to the drought.]

Sangita Kala Acharya T.S. Parthasarathi, in his opinion of the titan, mentions.

'Having drunk deep for decades at the fountain of Ariyakudi's music, it is a privilege for me to say a few words about that peerless maestro.'

'The *Ariyakudi Pantha* meant an attractive, polished, charming, lively and aesthetically vigorous style of singing. He evolved a format into which he packed all the essentials of our music. He proved that the core of ragas could be presented in short crisp *alapanas* as against the long and somewhat tiring *alapanas* which were the order of the day. Times were changing, *rasikas* were impatient and Ariyakudi came as the man of the hour. He could feel the mood of the audience at each concert and adjust his repertoire. He sang with great self relish, enjoying every item of his own music. It was no wonder that his audience were transported to joy

'He built up an enormous repertoire over the years and composed memorable music for *Tiruppavai* and the *Rama Nataka Kirthanas*. Blessed were the *rasikas* who had an opportunity to listen to the ethereal music of the unforgettable Ariyakudi' □

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From the Archives

MUSICAL MESSAGE OF NATIONAL BARD

A queer picture he was in appearance, address and attire. Garbed in a turban, an open coat, a necktie and always speeding at breakneck pace as if in a hurry. And his utterances? Cryptic and penetrating, often touching lofty ideals, yet bewildering many and setting some a-thinking. For all that, his language was no nutcracker. It was commonplace, simple, straight and forthright with no inhibitions; and his tone always at a neat pitch that never failed to attract. Many took him for a non-entity, they even called him a *pithan* (mad man).

Yes a *pithan* he was in a way judging from his fanatic devotion to his *Ishta Devatha* - Goddess Sakthi, to his motherland and to his mother tongue. Little did his generation understand him. Less could they dream that this *pithan* was no mere visionary but a saint who could foresee the future and one who could arouse his bretheren from their slumber of near-slavery. That was Subrahmanya Bharathi, the poet-patriot whose birth centenary is widely celebrated all over the country now, but who was much misunderstood in his times.

The name of Bharathi has however passed into the annals of history as a freedom-fighter-poet-patriot, whose contribution towards the renaissance of Tamil literature was on par with that of Gurudev Tagore. He was hailed as a national poet, a *Daiveeka Pulavar*

(divine poet) and a *Jeevanmukta*. What is not much known is that he is a musical genius too, in the manner of a composer and a singer. Little is on record of his fine perception of fine arts. It is no exaggeration that he believed music as an easy vehicle for getting across holy and lofty messages – especially for stirring up patriotic spirit in the somnolent people and achieved this by composing a number of poems, free verses and hymns that were of epic dimension.

There seemed to be no subject which Bharathi did not handle and nothing that he touched lacked his incisive approach and intense expression. His verses, kirtanas, epic-poems and patriotic songs all speak of his musical genius and the streamlined format he chose, to reach his message to the masses.

For arousing patriotism in men he chose folk melodies, simple lyrics – even that had great mass appeal eg. "Thonru Nighazhanda", "Vande Mataram" and so on. The drum beats of "Viduthalai", "Achchamillai" and "Vetri Ettudikkumetta" galloped the patriotic pace. A sober pace was employed for hymns on Bharata Mata, whom he visualized in "Parasakthi" to evoke bhakti in the minds.

From divine bhakti to human emotions, his "Kannan Pattu" covers a vast range and various rasas depicting the Lord as parent, Guru, monarch, child, lover and even servant. The collection is a veritable treasure for dancers as the

Nayaka-Nayaki bhava imbued in it lends itself to excellent visualization. Scholars like Va Ve Su have attributed this to the influence of Alwars' "Divya Prabhandam" on Bharathi.

The epic poem "Panchali Sabadam" (Draupadi's Vow) is Bharathi's magnum opus. The very selection of the theme shows Bharathi's intensity and vividness of imagery. In the hapless Draupadi, he envisioned none but Mother India in shackles of alien rule and in the vow her unflinching resolve to destroy evil and set herself free. Set in simple lyrics and to evocative tunes, it has a direct and dramatic impact.

The song of the cuckoo, "Kuyil Paattu" another of Bharathi's monumental creations hailed as "a journey into arcadian regions of the mind where the music of the spheres mingles with that of the haunting notes of the cuckoo" leaves an indelible impress of the tortuous path tread by the *jeevatma* yearning to merge with the *paramatma*.

Just as he was a master-versifier, Bharathi was also a versatile *Vaggeyakara*. His verses could be rhythmically set within a Tala (time cycle) or sung in an extemporized melodic form such as Virutham. This, perhaps, explains his views on Tala, which, technically speaking he kept at an arm's length. In an article "Sangeetha Vishayam" covering his philosophy and perception of music and dance, Bharathi says that 'music must be melodious and not percussive and therefore Tala must be assigned a secondary place'.

Quite a number of his songs were assigned ragas that best suited their genre, though in course of time, musicians cast them in their own pet melodies. Mostly he favoured 'rakti' ragas like Kambhoji, Bilahari, Ananda Bhairavi, Kalyani, Dhanyasi etc., though ragas of elusive charm were not unknown to him. But for a sound knowledge of musical theory and practice, how could he have handled Saindhavi and Saraswati Manohari? And is not his "Eththanai Koti Inbam" in Dhanyasi a well-knit kriti comparable to Vedanayakam Pillai's or Sivan's?

Himself a singer with fine voice (those who have heard him sing at the Madras Marina go rhapsodic in their nostalgic recalling) Bharathi had, as early as the first quarter of this century, recorded his observations on voice culture a plane where the "Uttara Bharatiyas" score over their southern counterparts. (Incidentally should not one draw this to the attention of the orthodox and conservative who have been crying hoarse on the fall in standards after the thirties?) In fact Bharathi foresaw democratization of arts and went to the extent of evolving a code for musicians and dancers so as to preserve 'classicism'. In his zest for women's lib, he had not forgotten to hint at their necessary role in music. Not confining to ritual music, they should, he emphasized, be trained in classical music and Vina, he felt if handled by women would be most pleasing. He had also visualized then, women's deeper involvement in

classical dance and prepared a list of do's and don'ts.

What Bharathi had uttered then is relevant even today and his efforts had their effects and his dream turned true. Many of his songs are sung today in

concerts and his poems visualized in dance depictions or choreographed into ballets. Thus is kept alive, the message of the National Bard.

- Kinnari

It is remarkable that Subramanya Bharati had drawn inspiration from the songs of Gopalakrishna Bharati who died just a year before he was born and when the epic drama, Nandanar was the rage in villages and towns, in dramas and concerts. If Gandhiji drew inspiration on seeing the drama on Harischandra while young, surely Subramanya Bharati should have seen Nandanar which fuelled his burning innate genius. The fact that this had not been recorded by any is immaterial since his songs eloquently reveal and bear testimony to the same beyond any doubt

Gopalakrishna Bharati

Maadu tinnum pulaiyaa
Unakku margali tirunaalo?

Jnaayam tano nir sollum
Oy, Nandanaare, namma jaathikkadukkumo?

Namenna seyvom pulayare, indha

Bhoomiyilillaada pudumaiyai kandom

Tillaivelile kalandu kondal avar
tirumbiyum varuvaaro!

Subramanya Bharati

Thondu seyyum adimai
Unakku sudandiram ninaivodaa?

Oy, Tilakare, namma jathikkadukkumo
Seyvadu sariyo, sollum

Namenna seyvom thunaivare, indha

Bhoomiyilillaada pudumaiyai kandom

Vira sudandiram vendi nindrar avar
verondru kolvaaro!

And many more. Hindu philosophy says that the soul is immortal and so it could be safely asserted that the soul that cast away the body that housed Gopalakrishna Bharati in Thanjavur district in 1881 travelled to Ettayapuram and took over the body that was to be Subramanya Bharati in 1882. It should be so. Both were eminent scholars and poets imbued with fervour to fight against injustice, were poor in economic terms and have left a legacy that is impenshable. Gopalakrishna Bharati did not sing on patriotism since the torch of freedom struggle had not been lit during his time

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Interview

MANGALAMPALLI BALAMURALI KRISHNA - THE MAVERICK MAESTRO by K.Subadra Murthy

Dr.M Balamurali Krishna is the 2nd recipient of the Sri Jayendra Saraswati National Eminence Award in Fine Arts and was felicitated at the Shanmukhananda Sn Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Auditorium, Mumbai recently. The Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam had instituted this award to promote excellence in Fine Arts and the first award was bestowed on Thiruvengadam Jayaraman at Chennai.

Dr. MBK gave a scintillating concert after the felicitation and agreed to an interview the next morning at the residence of his disciple Rama Verma, chatting in his own inimitable style on a variety of topics. Given below is an excerpt from the interview for the benefit of the readers of 'Shanmukha'.

KSM: *You have a great legacy in music. We understand your mother Suryakanthamma was a vainika of repute and your father Pattabhiramayya was a famous flutist.*

MBK: Yes, my mother was a veena artiste and was the first lady to perform in public those days. In 1930, when she passed away, The Hindu published a photo of her holding a veena. My maternal grandfather, Ranganatha garu has several beautiful compositions to his credit. I seem to have inherited music and poetry from him. I do not really know how my father took to music, but yes, he was a reputed musician of his time.

KSM: *You are often called a maverick, having followed your own path - whether it is the content of your repertoire or developing a raga. What is your definition of tradition? Is it necessary to strictly adhere to it?*

MBK: Till the last century, there was no tradition of musical concerts. Whatever singing there was, existed as an accompaniment to the dance of the devadasi-s and was therefore not considered a respectable profession. Till

Thyagaraja's time there were no music concerts. Why, even Thyagaraja did not give music concerts as such.

Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer was the first to start a kutcheri paddhathi and later Ariyakudi established it. Tradition is never static, it is ever changing according to the times. We certainly cannot live like our forefathers did! Music will live and flourish only if there are changes. And changes are very good and should occur.

KSM: *There was a report in the media that you were appointed by Apollo Hospitals as advisor for their Music Therapy Course. Could you tell us something about it?*

MBK: I have nothing to do with that. I was just asked verbally in a chance encounter if I would be their advisor - I have not indicated my acceptance.

KSM: *Could you throw some light on music therapy and tell us something about your own work in this field?*

MBK: What I have done is much research in it, not therapy. Of course, I did try some therapy too on some people, but it was more as experiments to prove my

research. I found that music therapy can be useful for good health and to cure diseases

I have never revealed the secrets of my research. Earlier I had mentioned a couple of things in my talks and soon many people started claiming to do music therapy. It is not what everyone claims it to be.

KSM: *Is there a scientific basis for music therapy?*

MBK: Yes, there is scientific basis, but most so called music therapists do not know that. What many people fail to understand is that music can not only cure diseases but it can also create diseases if used improperly. A raga that is good for a particular individual need not be suitable for another person. It is like electricity - very useful when you have control over it but it can also be very dangerous if used carelessly!

It is wrong to apply the term 'music therapy' to much of the music that claim to cure many illnesses - they can only produce soothing effects as good music is certainly soothing and relaxing. But one should understand that it is not the raga itself that cures an illness or a person with disease. The healing takes place when a particular raga is presented and applied in a specific manner and it is variable, differing from person to person.

KSM: *Why have you not published your research as yet?*

MBK: To prove that my research is scientific and to prove its efficacy, I need

elaborate equipment and a hospital. Then I will implement my research practically, demonstrate, teach, establish and write for public consumption. I have long lost hopes of ever doing this - I could have perhaps done it fifteen years ago, but not any longer!! There is no one who will grant or donate the huge amount of money and support that is needed for this.

KSM: *It is indeed a pity. But all your fans will certainly wish you luck. Please tell us something about your trust - the M. Balamurali Krishna Trust and the work done by it.*

MBK: No, it is not my Trust though it is named after me. It is run and managed by Mrs. Saraswathi.

The main problem is funds. Nobody wants to give money to music. I have my research work and have created much and they should be preserved for future generations. I would like to explain the specialty of each composition with the technology that is available today. All music - whether it is by a child or a mature artiste, good as well as bad, should be preserved. But there is no money even to print my own work on the 72 Melakarta raga-s. A few copies of this was printed and published as a small book several years ago. All I need is 6 lakhs to print in all languages - unfortunately no one is coming forth to fund this.

KSM: *You are a prolific composer - a true vaggeyakara. Even at the age of 14, you had composed the Raganga Raveli on the 72 Melakarta raga-s. What inspires*

you to compose?

MBK: It seems to run in the family. Like I said before, I seem to have inherited this from my grandfather. I get ideas and start composing and draw inspiration from many poets. It's not enough to have ideas - one should give them shape by writing, composing and also teaching them to others for the creations to flourish, or else they just wither and die.

Though the public in general knows me more as a musician, the poets consider me as one of them. My inspiration is through music and it continues to grow. There's something new happening everyday and one is more experienced than the previous day. There should be constant addition in one's music too.

I wanted to compose in the 72 Melakarta raga-s - it was a conscious desire. After that I never really wanted to compose but it just happens and I flow with it. Sometimes I even compose right there on the concert platform, but someone will have to write it down, otherwise I might forget (smiles)

KSM: *The Tamizh Isai Sangam, which honours mostly Tamilians and those who popularize Tamizh music, had conferred on you the Isai Perarignyar Award. In fact you are one of the 4 exceptions - the other 3 being Chittoor Subramanya Pillai, Sheikh Chinna Moulana and Yesudas. The language of Carnatic music too is largely Telugu and you also hail from Andhra Pradesh. Would you like to comment on this?*

MBK: Well, I have composed much in Tamil too, recorded many songs of Bharathiyar and other Tamil poets, popularized them and sung in Tamil films also. I have spent a large part of my life in Tamil Nadu and no one there thinks I am a non-Tamilian. In fact, I was the first one to be appointed as a State Minister of Tamil Nadu. The specialty of the T N government and its people is that they recognize all artistes and honour their talent irrespective of where they come from or what language they speak. I have also been awarded the Kalaimamani. I sang only Tamil compositions in my concert at the Isai Perarignyar Award concert - something that no Tamilian musician had ever done.

I have done much for Karnataka also and popularised Kannada composers. I have recorded more Kannada songs than even Kannadigas, but recognition is lacking there unlike in Tamil Nadu.

What we know as Carnatic music is only from Thyagaraja's time. Yes, Carnatic music has more compositions in Telugu. The composers of those days considered Telugu a musical language and so composed in it. Like I declared at the Tamizh Isai Sangam in my acceptance speech, there is no difference between Tamizh Isai and Telugu. Music that is composed by Thyagaraja in Telugu is nothing but Tamizh Isai. The language of Tamizh Isai is Telugu.

Thamizh Isai is the basis for our music and dance. Tamil is the original language. All other languages are derived from Sanskrit. Real Tamil is beautiful;

Unfortunately no one uses that Tamil now. It is only natural for Tamilians to want to listen to songs in their own language as they can enjoy and understand the poetry better.

In our days the perceptions were different. We never thought we went to Tamil Nadu to sing - we went to Madras to sing. There was a feeling of oneness, with just different languages, tastes, food, etc and we accepted this diversity as part and parcel of our life. But now, people try to make an issue of the language for political and personal gains. That only begets regionalism, hatred and separation. Music transcends all this.

Good music should conform to the sahitya bhava. Now musicians have realized the importance of knowing the language of the composition. The younger generation is better aware of this and makes a conscious effort in this direction. Proper pronunciation and understanding of the language of the compositions is essential for a vocalist. If one is not willing to put in the requisite effort, its better to give up vocal music and play an instrument instead.

Music needs much concentration. Chanting of mantra-s is also music and is very powerful and healing if done properly. But we have lost the exact modality of chanting them, so they are no longer powerful. Even here, as in music, sruti and laya suddham is required for their efficacy.

KSM: Would you comment on the current music scenario? What do you think about

the future of our music?

MBK: There is interest, response and facilities. It's easy to get recognition unlike in our times. I'm happy that there is much talent - it is on the rise. There are easy ways to become popular, so they try and are happy.

I have no misgivings regarding the future of music or the current generation of musicians. Luckily for them, they have so many facilities available. I am luckier than my elders and my students are luckier than me in this respect. Only when people listen can we sing and only then will we get opportunities to sing and only then people will know about us. And unless they hear us frequently, we will not be remembered over the years.

Several decades ago, if you gave 100 concerts, perhaps a few people would know about you. The advent of Radio and later TV brought about much more awareness. One radio performance is equal to 100 concerts and one performance on TV is equal to 100 radio programs. Media Power is so great that now the whole world knows about you. Artistes of our generation like Ariyakudi did not have this advantage. The maestros of yesteryears are known within a limited area in the country and that's not enough! They are remembered only for some time and then forgotten.

What has been done for them? Nothing! People vie with each other to build more and more places of worship. Why do we need more than what we already have? What results is communal and religious disharmony brought about

by different factions. Instead we should build memorials to honour people who have given us inventions and discoveries that have improved the quality of life - like radio, TV, airplane, telephone, life saving drugs, etc. I am not an atheist (nasthika) when I say this - I believe in God like anyone else. Certainly one should have a place to pray but at the same time we should also remember all the great people who have contributed much to society, whether they are musicians or inventors. There should be a change in the mindset of the people.

KSM: Who do you consider is your musical heir who would carry your rich legacy forward?

MBK: There are several disciples, Rama Verma is one. I have disciples everywhere but I do not know if they are the rightful

heirs. These days they cannot dedicate themselves completely to music - depends on many factors. Not many can concentrate on music alone, the times are like that. So I cannot really say who can or will carry this forward.

KSM: Are you happy and satisfied with what you have achieved in your long innings in the world of music?

MBK: Looking back, I am very happy. I feel I have received more recognition than I deserve. I'm not responsible for any of it - I am merely an instrument of music. I am not a musician as I do not know any music. But music knows me and it just comes and flows through me. That's all! Neither do I do anything to maintain my voice, it maintains itself. I believe in flowing with nature and letting things take care of themselves. □

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Interview

GURU VEMPATI CHINNA SATYAM - A LEGEND IN HIS OWN LIFETIME by K.Subadra Murthy

The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha recently honoured Guru Vempati Chinna Satyam with the Lifetime Achievement Award. The award, instituted 3 years ago was earlier given to two musicians in the Carnatic and Hindustani streams, viz: Sri Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer and Pt. Bhimsen Joshi. In the dance field, Guru Vempati is the first one to receive this prestigious award. And that speaks volumes about the greatness of this maestro and his work.

The author of this piece has had the privilege of interacting with Guru Vempati for over a decade on several aspects of Kuchipudi and his contribution and is pleased to interview the maestro for 'Shanmukha' readers and for the benefit the members of the Sabha. His son Vempati Ravi also spoke, supplementing his father's views

KSM: You have received several prestigious awards from all over the world. How do you feel about being the first to receive this Lifetime Achievement Award in the field of dance from Shanmukhananda?

VCS: I feel deeply honoured. My association with Shanmukhananda goes back several years when I presented my dance drama 'Srinivasa Kalyanam' to a packed house. I am happy to be back here on this occasion.

KSM: Many of your fans here were hoping to see one of your new ballets...?

VCS: I would have liked that too, but time was limited. The Sabha management had asked for a ballet and I decided to present my very first production 'Sri Krishna Parijatam'. To bring any other dance drama would have required a big troupe of dancers and much preparation, rehearsals, etc. It was not possible this time as I had just returned from abroad after a long tour. I was in Chennai barely for three days before arriving here to receive the award.

KSM: You are staging your production here at the Sabha after a very long gap of nearly 2 decades. Why is it you have not performed more often here?

VCS: Oh no! I have performed here a few times after that!

KSM: But they were not Sabha programs except that in the 1996 Kuchipudi Mahotsav organized by G.M.Sarma your dance drama was staged here with the Sabha's collaboration. But I'm talking about performing here at the invitation of Shanmukhananda Sabha like now.

VCS: Well, for one thing I suppose it was because the auditorium was unfortunately burnt down and it took several years to resurrect this beautiful one. Another reason could be because I may not have been available when they tried to contact me. Even now for this award when they first tried to contact me I was not in India as I was touring other countries. They then traced my whereabouts and contacted me to intimate about this award

The funds I receive during my tours

staging my productions, besides performances in India, finance my productions as well as sustain my institution, the Kuchipudi Art Academy. Teaching is free at the Academy and I do not make money out of it. So I travel quite often.

KSM: *The combination of Vempati (Choreography), Sri Bhujangaraya Sarma (Lyrics) and Sri Sangeeta Rao (music) has resulted in some outstanding productions like "Hara Vilasam, Rukmini Kalyanam Shiva Dhanurbhangam", etc. Bhujangaraya Sarma is no more and Sangeeta Rao has become old. Have you found anyone else of their caliber to team up with you?*

VCS: You are right. That was indeed a golden period and the three of us had formed a fantastic team. Like you said Bhujangaraya Sarma is no more and Sangeeta Rao is old like me. People have changed and there is no one like them who knows how to give me what I want.

I do have someone new who penned the lyrics for my latest production "Gopika Krishna". He is okay but cannot measure up to Bhujangaraya Sarma. Of the old team, Flute Nagarajan is still with me. If people stay with me for sometime and tune themselves to my wavelength and ideas through constant interaction, then I can come out with beautiful creations. But it's not possible these days to get such idealistic conditions.

KSM: *Though Kuchipudi is largely Telugu oriented, you have two dance dramas*

translated into Tamil – 'Srinivasa Kalyanam (Padmavati Thirumanam) and Parijatam', why is it you have not translated more of your work into Tamil or other languages? After all wouldn't that enhance the popularity of your work even more when people can understand the lyrics?

VCS: Yes, I would certainly like to do much more of this, but await a suitable opportunity.

Vempati Ravi: Srinivasa Kalyanam was reproduced in Tamil for the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, 'Sri M.G. Ramachandran' who inaugurated our institution the Kuchipudi Art Academy. He had given us much support in establishing it. But getting good writers is the problem – their work should be suitable for the dance parlance – not only should the language be appropriate, it should also conform to the music, it is very difficult to adapt the music to other languages in such translated scripts. We are not satisfied with what is available in this instance.

KSM: *Would you like to comment on the quality of dancing then and now?*

VCS: I am not very happy with what we have now. Earlier there were fine dancers like Sobha, Chandrakala, Kamala Reddy and several others who were good dancers and very dedicated. Nowadays, the dancers are not as good and even if they are talented, they are not dedicated enough. These are the effects of changing times. There's nothing one can do except accept the situation and make

do with what is available.

There are about 60-70 students at my institute right now. Of these maybe 5-6 are good, the rest are just average. So when we have to stage a performance we pay and get good artistes from Andhra, who stay with us for 2 months or as required for practice and rehearsals. There are some who are very co-operative and others who are not. When I get dancers who are dedicated, I can do wonders!

(Author's note: Most of these artistes are disciples of Vempati or from the traditional practitioners of Kuchipudi and many of them take part not only in Vempati's ballets but also collaborate with Kuchipudi dancers everywhere when required – as dancers, singers, for nattuvangam etc. This is a specialty of these artistes.)

KSM: *How long does it take to get a production off the ground?*

VCS: We had spent more than six months getting our latest dance drama 'Gopika Krishna' ready for performance. Sometimes, it may take even a year as unless I am satisfied with every aspect, I do not like to present it to audiences. For 'Gopika Krishna' we must have had at least 20 rehearsals.

KSM: *You have introduced much innovation in several aspects of Kuchipudi – in choreography, music, stagecraft, etc. You have also presented Tagore's 'Chandalika' – a contemporary ballet, which is socially relevant even today. But you have not done anything like that again – what is holding you back?*

VCS: Apart from 'Chandalika', I have done other work when I was specifically

asked for something different, e.g. my dance drama 'Sri Krishna Parijatam' was presented with 4 dancers, each dancing in a different style in the spirit of National Integration. My disciple performed Kuchipudi, disciples of Birju Manaraj, Kelucharan Mohapatra and Kalyanasundaram Pillai performed Kathak, Odissi, and Bharata Natyam respectively. Each of the 4 protagonists danced in a different style and it received much acclamation. Besides this, there was also a collaborative venture with Kuchipudi and Russian ballet. My son Ravi participated in a version of 'Swan Lake' with a Russian ballerina.

Such experimental works require great ideas and much time. Yes, I can do much more – if someone requests me to produce something new for them, I shall certainly do it. I do not venture much into this on my own these days because the standard of dancing has gone down greatly. I do not feel motivated as a result though the creative urge is still there within me.

KSM: *Recently, Saswati Sen, disciple of Birju Maharaj had presented Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet in Kathak – it was an excellent ballet without lyrics and with just instrumental music (both western and Indian). Of course it is a popular love story and was well received. Have you ever thought about doing such work, which even international audiences can understand?*

VCS: I am more inspired by classical themes and feel that the flow is good only

if there are lyrics - at least, it is so for me. Even in the case of my new ballet 'Gopika Krishna' I was not too happy with the lyrics. It was after Sangeeta Rao made some modifications that I am somewhat satisfied. On my return to Chennai, I intend working on another production - 'Kireetaarjuneeyam', yet another theme from mythology.

KSM: With your vast experience, what is your advice to teachers and students of dance?

VCS: It takes at least 5-6 years before the young dancers are equipped to perform. They have to wait till they reach that stage of readiness, but everyone, most of all the parents are in a hurry. This is not the right attitude. There are so many items now in the Kuchipudi repertoire but there are not enough dedicated students with the right sort of urge and imagination who can learn and perform them. The attitude has to change.

Whether it is dance or any other field, whatever they attempt, youngsters should learn well, wholeheartedly and not just as a pastime. Complete dedication is needed to achieve something in life, including becoming a good dancer. They must understand that not everyone can become maestros, but that is no reason to be lax. Teachers too should teach according to the capacity of the student. In fact, I feel even teachers should attend refresher courses.

KSM: How would you rate your son Ravi's progress? Do you consider him as

the torchbearer of your legacy?

VCS: Well, he has a good sense of rhythm, can write good lyrics and as Balamurali's disciple, he can also sing creditably. These days due to my age and indifferent health, it is he who teaches in my stead at our institute. He has to wait for the right opportunity to prove himself - whether he is capable of carrying the torch forward!

Ravi: I got the opportunity to work with my father during the production of the dance drama 'Ardhanareeswara' and have continued to do so ever since. I like to experiment and do something new. Like my father said earlier, we were not happy with the lyrics for 'Gopika Krishna' - particularly for Yasodha's character. I rewrote some of it and Sangeeta Rao garu approved my attempt. He said that my version conveyed the right feeling and that it blended well with the rest and accordingly my writings were used wherever it was appropriate.

Though I compose and also do the nattuvangam, I still need to develop more and hope that I will rise to the occasion when the time comes. I have tried my hand at choreography also - the most memorable experience was a recent program to celebrate my father's birthday in Washington DC.

One of my father's senior disciples, Kamala Reddy had conceived a theme based on his life from birth till now, including all his works. Narayanamurthy wrote the lyrics, Nagarajan (who has been with us since decades) set the music, I composed the jatis and Kamala

did the choreography. All his students wanted to perform, but there was not enough time for everyone to participate. Then, I suggested that I could compose and choreograph a Tillana so that everyone, seniors and juniors alike could dance as a group as a tribute to their guru on the occasion. The Tillana was in Panchajati, in five ragas and was a great hit. We focused on 5 different aspects of my father's life - as a son,

sishya, husband, father and guru. This was appreciated by all and I was happy to have contributed my mite on that special occasion

KSM: Are you satisfied with the developments in Kuchipudi dance?

VCS: We have achieved something in all these years - but that's not enough. A lot more needs to be done. □

Alapana

The following are some of the criteria that govern alapana -

<i>Muka Aalatti</i>	Jiva Swara (s)
<i>Murai</i>	Step by step delineation on ascending and descending notes and in different kalas
<i>Mudivu</i>	Interim endings to produce effects and joy
<i>Niraivu</i>	Comprehensive (purnatvam) delineation
<i>Kuraivu</i>	Short and abrupt ending
<i>Valivu</i>	Timbre
<i>Kilamai</i>	Inter-relation of notes
<i>Varaiyarai</i>	Adherence to musicology - arohana, avarohana, etc and
<i>Nirmai</i>	Bhava, Rasa, Swarupa of each raga.

Source : The Fragrant Garland

BOOK REVIEW

**SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA (REGD.)**

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Shri. S. Venkiteswaran**An Introduction to Folk Songs of Gujarat**

Author : R C Mehta.

Published by : Indian Musicological Society, Mumbai and Baroda.

Pages : viii + 78,

Price : Rs. 100

Every part of the country has its own tradition of folk-songs connected with either important events in the family like birth, wedding, etc., or in the community as in the case of agricultural operations. In modern days, the general knowledge about such songs is limited, more so in relation to those prevalent in regions other than one's own in the country. They have a rich textual, melodic and rhythmic content so much so there are classical musicians who include them towards the end of their concerts when it is time for light music. Thus, for example, Annamalai Reddiar's Kavadichintu-s in Tamil have figured in the concerts of no less a musician than M S Subbulakshmi. Musicologists have pointed out that there are raga-s which owe their origin to folk-songs. In fact they predate classical music.

Under the circumstances any book that introduces folk-songs of a region to the lay reader is welcome as an attempt to enrich his knowledge about his national heritage. The book under review seeks to impart knowledge about such songs in Gujarat to the general public. This is all the more welcome because little is

known about the contribution of Gujarat to Indian music and dance although its architectural achievements are well publicised, thanks to the promotion of tourism. As a result, the common man tends to identify "Vaishnava Janato" and Dandiya Rasa and Garba as the State's only contributions to Indian music and dance, respectively.

There are six chapters in the book, viz., "Gujarat: The Land", "Folksong Expression", "Songs and Folk Dances of Gujarat", "Folk Musical Instruments", "Folk Music Styles: A Few Observations" and "Folk Song Research in Gujarat - An Epilogue". Unfortunately the author has missed a good opportunity to educate the reader in the subject under reference. One is unable to say what one has learnt from the book. He refers to varying traditions in the three major regions of the State, but is not able to bring out the differences and commonalities among them. On pages 48 and 58 there is some attempt to link folk music with the classical but it does not explore the matter deeper. Apart from what he has mentioned (Sorath, Khamaj and Kambhavati), there should certainly be some more raga-s with an origin in Gujarat, particularly because that State and Rajasthan have had a common heritage for a long time. We have heard the songs of such greats as Meera in what is called Rajasthan-Gujarati.

The publication needs heavy editing

(For example, "folk song" and "folk dance" need to be hyphenated.) Right from the first page there are spelling mistakes and syntactical slips. They constitute an irritant and make one wonder whether it is worth reading further. Pages 69 and 76 are blank. One can make out that a few songs transliterated into English are not printed. Incidentally one does not know the purpose of transliteration. They do not make any sense to a non-Gujarati and, if they are meant for the Gujarati readers, they should have been in that language. There is always a problem in transliteration and, although there is an international convention thereof established several decades ago, it is generally not followed. However, the translations into English of the songs in Chapters 2 and 3 are interesting. The chapter on musical instruments could have included their pictures.

□
- A. S.

CAMEOS

Published by : Sunadham,
11 B, Surya Apartments
Baliah Avenue, Luz, Mylapore.
Price : Rs. 250

Way back in 1942, Sri. R. Krishnamurthy, the brilliant editor of "Kalki" magazine, hit upon the very constructive idea of requesting the doyen of Harikatha, Sri Soolamangalam Vaidhyanatha Bhagavathar, to recount his memorable experiences in the fields of Harikatha and Carnatic Sangeetha. In

1942 and 1943, the pages of "Kalki" epitomized the Bhagavathar's unique experiences during the latter half of the 19th century and early 20th century, as he had moved closely with the numerous Sangitha Vidvans, as well as the reputed Harikatha performers of that period.

What lent a special aura to this doyen of Harikatha was that he was also a very capable musician who could sing hundreds of Sri Tyagaraja's compositions with a total involvement, flowing from his great bhakti for the saint. It prompted him to conduct, every year, Aradhana at the Samadhi with devotion and sincerity, involving many like-minded souls to join in the uniquely sincere offering, etc.

The Bhagavathar's grandson, Sri. M. Rammohan, published the Kalki Tamil articles in book form in 1994, mainly at the suggestion of the late Sri T.S. Balakrishna Sastrigal, Harikatha performer. The latter wrote a foreword in which he extolled the bhakti and musical capacity of Soolamangalam, while deprecating the low levels to which the art of Harikatha had fallen.

As a committed descendent of Vaidhyanatha Bhagavathar, Sri Rammohan decided to publish an English translation of the Tamil publication. His sincere commitment prompted him to supplement the English edition, with articles by other highly respected historians like Prof. Sambamurthy, Sri. R. Rangaramanuja Iyengar, and the leading personalities of that era, including Soolamangalam as well.

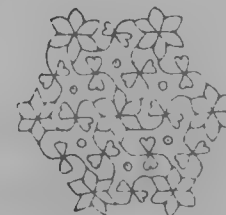
This was a constructive move since it has added an interesting dimension to the study of the trends of music of Harikatha. Smt. Padma Narayanan did the translation into English with rare competence, while Smt. Meera, the daughter of Rammohan, has ably supervised the completion of this laudable project.

Present day rasikas would be astonished to note that a large number of great Vidvans (Vaggeyakaras, Performers etc.) comprising not only the leading ones like Mahavaidyanatha Iyer, Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer, Mamundiah Pillai, Narayanaswami Appa but also numerous other qualified singers, violinists, vainikas, percussionists of conspicuous ability held the lamp of Carnatic music high. One wonders how they survived at all

considering that chances of professional engagement were so scarce. And yet, these men kept up the torch of music aloft and maintained dignity. All the more strange to come across stories of jealousy etc. that have come down to us. It would appear that the latter half of the 19th century was really a Golden Age for Harikatha and Carnatic music, which was duly reflected in the inestimable respect for Sri Tyagaraja conveyed through sincere Aradhanas, worship etc.

Veteran musicologist Sangeetha Kala Acharya Sri. T.S. Parthasarathy has contributed a foreword of deep significance in his characteristically learned manner. The get-up of this book is attractive with fine pictures and glossy too; a powerful searchlight on one of the golden periods of Carnatic music. □

K.S. Mahadevan





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OBITUARY

T. T. VASU

The recent passing away of Shri. T.T. Vasu in Chennai at the age of 76 has left a void in the Carnatic music world that would be difficult to fill. In addition to the multifarious business ventures in which he sponsored and funded projects, he was also engaged in large scale philanthropic activities. He contributed in large measures to the promotion of health care, travel and communications. As for the field of Carnatic Music, he made unparalleled contributions by serving at the helm of affairs of the Music Academy in Chennai for over two decades. During this period, under his able stewardship, the organization grew from strength to strength and became one of the most important cultural organizations in the country for the promotion of Carnatic Music.



Seen in the above photograph (from L to R) - Shri T.T. Vasu, Shri. C. Subramaniam, the then Governor of Maharashtra and Dr. V. Subramaniam, the then President of the Sabha at the inauguration of the Chennai Art Festival

The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha will always remember with gratitude, the stellar role played by the Shri. T.T. Vasu in the conduct of a 10 day Art Festival in Chennai in October 1990. This festival was aimed at collecting funds for the Shanmukhananda Sabha. The 'TTK Auditorium' of the Music Academy was made available free of cost, for conducting the festival, thanks to the good offices of Shri. T.T. Vasu. Shri. Vasu played a key role in the organization and conduct of this festival. One might say that in the passing away of Shri. Vasu, the Shanmukhananda Sabha has lost a great friend and well-wisher.

- P.N.K.

SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA
MUSIC COMPETITION 2004 - 2005 — LIST OF PRIZE WINNERS

SHANMUKHA □ JULY - SEPTEMBER 2005

Sr. No.	Title of the Endowment / Memorial	Names of the Prize Winners
CARNATIC VOCAL		
1.	B.V.S. Iyengar Memorial (Instituted by M/s. Iyengar & Co.) (Age 10 - 15 yrs)	1st Prize : Kum. J.R. Anahita 2nd Prize : Mast. Karthik Suresh
2.	Smt. Dharmambal Subramanian Endowment (Instituted by Smt. Pasupati for Varnams only) (Age 10 - 12 yrs)	1st Prize : Kum. J.R. Anahita 2nd Prize : Kum. Aishwarya Rajesh Consolation Prize : Kum. Kanakavalli Santhanam
3.	Neelambal Jagadeesan Memorial 'Dasarnama' (Instituted by Mrs. Jaya Vencatesan) (Age 10 - 15 yrs)	1st Prize : Kum. J.R. Anahita 2nd Prize : Kum. Sanjana Raman 3rd Prize : Mast. Karthik Suresh Consolation Prize : Kum. Aishwarya Rajesh
4.	Lakshmi Gopalkrishna Memorial (Instituted by Sri. R. Gopalkrishnan - "RGK") (Age 10 - 15 yrs)	6 Prizes : a) Kum. J.R. Anahita b) Kum. Sanjana Raman c) Kum. Abhirami Shankar d) Kum. B. Shobhana e) Kum. Sumitra Badrinathan f) Kum. Bhuvanaja Rajagopalan

SHANMUKHA □ JULY - SEPTEMBER 2005

Sr. No.	Title of the Endowment / Memorial	Names of the Prize Winners
5.	i.] Smt. Viyayalakshmi Nathan Endowment (Instituted by Sri. R. S. Nathan) ii.] Smt. N. Lakshmi Endowment (Instituted by Smt. N. Lakshmi) iii.] Smt. Kalyani Rajamani Endowment (Instituted by Sri. Rajamani) (Age 15 - 28 yrs)	1st Prize : Kum. Smrithi Sundararajan 2nd Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee
6.	i.] Kalki Memorial (Instituted by Sri. T. Sadashivan) ii.] Smt. Narayani Haridasan Memorial (Instituted by Sri. H. Shankar) (Age 10 - 16 yrs for Subramania Bharatiyar songs)	1st Prize : Kum. J.R. Anahita 2nd Prize : Mast. Srinath Ram Warrier Consolation Prizes : a) Kum. Sanjana Raman b) Kum. Abhirami Shankar
7.	i.] Karugudy V. Sankar Aiyar Endowment (Instituted by Sankar Aiyar & Co.) ii.] Sri. K. Gopalachari Memorial (Instituted by Sri. S. K. Iyengar) (Age 16 - 28 yrs for Papanasam Sivan Kritis)	1st Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee
8.	R. V. Murthi Endowment. (Instituted by Sri. R. V. Murthy) (Age 16 - 28 yrs)	1st Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee 2nd Prize : Kum. Poornima Muralidharan
9.	Smt. D. K. Pattammal Endowment (Instituted by Dr. V. V. Srivatsa for Pancharatna Kritis) (Age 16 - 28 yrs)	1st Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee

Sr. No.	Title of the Endowment / Memorial	Names of the Prize Winners
10.	i.] S. R. Kasturi Endowment (Instituted by S. R. Kasturi) ii.] P. R. Krishnaswamy Memorial (Instituted by Sri. S. K. Iyengar) iii.] Sri. Maharajapuram Santhanam Endowment (Instituted by Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer Trust) (Age 16 - 28 yrs for Tyagaraja Kritis)	: 1st Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee
11.	i.] T. S. Subramanian Endowment (Instituted by Sri. T. S. Subramanian) ii.] Alamelu Mangal Memorial (Instituted by Sri. S. K. Iyengar) (Age 16 - 28 yrs for Swati Tirunal Kritis)	: 1st Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee
12.	Karuganti Satyavathi Memorial (Instituted by Prof. K.S. Hanumantha Rao) (Age 16 - 28 yrs)	: 1st Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee
13.	Smt. D. K. Pattammal Endowment (Instituted by Dr. V. V. Srivatsa for Muthiah Bhagavathar Krithis) (Age 16 - 28 yrs)	: 1st Prize Consolation Prize : Kum. Smrithi Sundararajan : Kum. Viji Vishwanath
14.	Smt. D. K. Pattammal Endowment (Instituted by Dr. V. V. Srivatsa for Muthuswamy Dikshitar Kritis) (Age 16 - 28 yrs)	: 1st Prize Consolation Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee : Kum. Smrithi Sundararajan

Sr. No.	Title of the Endowment / Memorial	Names of the Prize Winners
15.	Gayakasikhamani Palghat Anantharama Bhagavathar Memorial (Instituted by Sri. T.A. Subramanian) (Age 16 - 28 yrs)	: 1st Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee
16.	i.] Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer Memorial (Instituted by Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer Trust) ii.] 'Karachi' Rajagopalan Memorial (Instituted by Smt. Lakshmi Rajagopalan) (Age 16 - 28 yrs for Alapana)	: 1st Prize : Kum. B.N. Chinmayee
CARNATIC VIOLIN		
17.	i.] G. Lakshmi Ammal Memorial (Instituted by Sri. G. Sundaresan) ii.] Smt. Mangalam Govindaswamy Endowment (Instituted by Sri. T. S. Krishnaswamy) Group I (Age 10 - 15 yrs for Varnams and Kritis)	: 1st Prize 2nd Prize Consolation Prize : Mast. Karthik Ramaswamy : Kum. Aditi Suresh : Kum. Shweta Kannan
18.	Shanta Sethuraman Memorial (Instituted by Sri. T. S. Krishnaswamy) Group II (Age 15 - 20 yrs for Varnams and Kritis)	: 1st Prize : Kum. Apurva Swaminathan

Sr. No.	Title of the Endowment / Memorial	Names of the Prize Winners
CARNATIC VEENA		
19.	Mullaikkudi G. Natarajan Memorial (Instituted by Smt. Lakshmi Natarajan) (Age 10 -12 yrs for Varnams)	1st Prize : Kum. Karuna Veeramani
20.	Lalitha Bhat Endowment (Instituted by Dr. L.G. Bhat) Group II (Age 15 - 20 yrs for Varnams and Kritis)	1st Prize : Kum. Gayatri Govindarajan
HINDUSTANI VOCAL		
21.	Group I (Age 10 - 15 yrs)	1st Prize : Kum. Deepika C. Bhide 2nd Prize : Kum. Mohini Roy
22.	Group I (Age 10 - 15 yrs)	1st Prize : Mast. Vinayak Anant Gawas 2nd Prize : Mast. Shiddarth N. Padiyar Consolation Prizes : (1) Mast. Trammay M. Phadke (2) Mast. Mihir P. Wairkar

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